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NOTES ON THE WARSAW PACT

ANNCR:

PRESS REPORTS OF ROMANIA'S RECENT REASSERTION OF ITS INDEPENDENT STANCE WITHIN THE WARSAW MILITARY PACT ARE DRAWING ATTENTION TO THE HISTORY OF THE SOVIET-LED ALLIANCE. HERE ARE SOME NOTES ON THE WARSAW PACT FROM VOA'S JULIAN GORSKI:

VOICE:

THE WARSAW TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP, COOPERATION AND MUTUAL ASSISTANCE -- COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE WARSAW PACT -- WAS SIGNED IN THE POLISH CAPITAL IN MAY, NINETEEN-FIFTY-FIVE. ITS DECLARED PURPOSE WAS TO ACT AS A DEFENSIVE COUNTERBALANCE TO THE WEST'S NORTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE. "THE CONTRACTING PARTIES," ARTICLE ONE OF THE MUTUAL ASSISTANCE TREATY STATES, "UNDERTAKE TO REFRAIN... IN THEIR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS FROM THE THREAT OR USE OF FORCE." AND THE DOCUMENT'S ARTICLE EIGHT SPEAKS OF COOPERATION AMONG THE PACT MEMBERS AIMED AT "STRENGTHENING (THEIR) ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL RELATIONS."

THE SIGNATORY NATIONS OF THE ORIGINAL TREATY WERE: THE SOVIET UNION, BULGARIA, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, EAST GERMANY, POLAND, HUNGARY, ROMANIA AND ALBANIA.

WITHIN EIGHTEEN MONTHS OF THE PACT'S SIGNING, SOVIET TANKS CRUSHED THE 1956 HUNGARIAN REVOLT AIMED AT OVERTHROWING THAT COUNTRY'S MOSCOW-SPONSORED GOVERNMENT. AND IN SEPTEMBER OF NINETEEN-SIXTY-EIGHT A SOVIET-LED ARMED PACT TASK FORCE ROLLED INTO PRAGUE TO PUT DOWN ALEXANDER DUBCEK'S SHORT-LIVED EFFORT TO CREATE WHAT WAS CALLED "SOCIALISM WITH A HUMAN FACE."

THE LATTER SOVIET ACTION WAS A KIND OF TURNING POINT IN THE HISTORY OF THE ALLIANCE. ALBANIA, WHICH HAD BEEN AT ODDS WITH

THE SOVIET BRAND OF COMMUNISM FOR SEVEN YEARS, WITHDREW FROM THE PACT, CHARGING THAT IT HAD BEEN TURNED "FROM A TREATY OF DEFENSE AGAINST IMPERIALIST AGGRESSION INTO AN AGGRESSIVE TREATY AGAINST THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES THEMSELVES."

DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE WARSAW PACT'S POLICIES WAS HARDLY CONFINED TO ALBANIA -- A TINY ADRIATIC STATE SEPARATED FROM THE SOVIET-LED ALLIANCE BY YUGOSLAVIA. FAR MORE IMPORTANTLY, ROMANIA, WHICH SHARES A COMMON BORDER WITH THE SOVIET UNION ITSELF, REFUSED TO JOIN IN THE MILITARY EXPEDITION AGAINST CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

FOR MORE THAN TWO YEARS PRIOR TO THE INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA, ROMANIAN LEADER NICOLAE CEAUSESCU HAD BEEN PURSUING INDEPENDENT POLICIES IN MILITARY AND ECONOMIC MATTERS. HE HAD REDUCED COMPULSORY MILITARY SERVICE AND CUT DOWN ON MILITARY EXPENDITURES IN AN EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN ROMANIA'S ECONOMY. NOW HE APPEARS TO BE APPLYING THOSE POLICIES TO THE WARSAW PACT ITSELF. FOLLOWING HIS RETURN FROM LAST WEEK'S PACT SUMMIT IN MOSCOW HE TOLD ROMANIAN OFFICIALS THAT HIS COUNTRY'S MILITARY BUDGET WOULD NOT BE RAISED... AND THAT THE WORLD SITUATION DID NOT JUSTIFY THE STRENGTHENING OF THE MILITARY ALLIANCE. HE ALSO SAID THAT NO ROMANIAN SOLDIER WOULD EVER TAKE ORDERS FROM FOREIGN COMMANDERS.

WHETHER MR. CEAUSESCU'S STANCE IS IN ANY WAY MATCHED BY ANY OTHER WARSAW PACT LEADERS IS UNCLEAR. BUT THERE SEEMS LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE WARSAW PACT, LIKE ANY OTHER INSTITUTION, IS SUBJECT TO PROFOUND CHANGE.

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